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ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8396
INFO RHMFISS/CDR USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL//SCJ2//
RULGPIA/USCOMSOLANT

UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 001153

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STATE FOR INR/R/MR, I/GWHA, WHA, WHA/PDA, WHA/BSC,
WHA/EPSC
CDR USSOCOM FOR J-2 IAD/LAMA

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION; 27TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE OAS IN PANAMA;
AMERICAS COMPETITIVENESS FORUM; 06/12/07

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Major international stories today include US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice repudiating "the censorship of not renewing private TV licenses in Venezuela" in the framework of the 27th OAS General Assembly in Panama; and US Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez's statements at the Americas Competitiveness Forum about the benefits of market freedom.

2. OPINION PIECES AND EDITORIALS

- "Grand (a) standing?"

Michael Soltys, executive editor of liberal, English-language "Buenos Aires Herald," writes (06/12) "... While Capitol Hill was questioning Uribe's Colombia Plan, the White House was less interested in defending Uribe than attacking Chavez - Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice showed up at the 27th General Assembly of the OAS in Panama to repudiate the 'censorship' of not renewing private TV licenses in Venezuela (the new pro-Chavez president of Ecuador, Rafael Correa, is now threatening to follow suit).

"This drive did not prosper with OAS Secretary General Jose Miguel Insulza rejecting any probe into Venezuela's freedom of speech as unwarranted intervention - an OAS reflex response rather than any victory for the incoherent splutterings of Rice's Venezuelan counterpart Nicolas Maduro about US President George W. Bush being the same as Adolf Hitler on the basis of the terrorist suspects held in Guantanamo base."

- "In the US view, market freedom 'is fundamental'"

Santiago Chelala, on special assignment in Atlanta for business-financial "El Cronista," writes (06/12) "When US Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez was consulted by 'El Cronista' about the US-Argentine relationship, he said that 'experience has demonstrated that the countries with the highest growth are those with the most economic openness.'"

"During the Americas Competitiveness Forum, which is being held in Atlanta, the USG official did not avoid speaking about farm subsidies, one of the thorniest issues.

"Having promoted FTAs in the region, Gutierrez showed a cautious attitude when speaking about Argentina. He diplomatically answered that 'while market freedom is fundamental in creating jobs and attracting investment, every country should make its own decisions.'"

"Asked about the possibility of lowering farm subsidies, his response was conclusive - 'Before we do that, there are many other things to do; the US is already one of the most open countries in

the world.'" "

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MATERA